

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following amended paragraph:

[0014] FIG. 2A is a side view of the bathing apparatus of FIG 1 FIG.

Please add the following new paragraph [0014.1] after paragraph [0014]:

[0014.1] FIG. 2B is a side view of the bathing apparatus of FIG 1, in accordance with another embodiment showing an optional hinged operability for the banister.

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021] Referring first to FIGs. 1, a bathing apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the invention is shown. As can be seen in FIGS. 1, 2A and 2B, the bathing apparatus comprises a bathtub 10 having a bathtub inside 12 for receiving a bather for bathing. The term bathtub is used in its ordinary sense, but also is intended to include a tub, a JacuzziTM, or a whirlpool. Bathtubs come in a variety of shapes. The bathtub 10 shown is somewhat rectangular, but in other embodiments, the bathtub 10 may be round, circular, oval, square, pentagonal or other shape (shown in phantom in FIG. 1) capable of containing a bather and water. Also, nothing is implied about the vertical placement of the bathtub relative to ground level, as some embodiments may rest at ground level, others may be sunken, and yet others may be raised above ground level by legs, a platform or other devices. The form of bathtub 10 shown is simply one of many possible forms.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] The inside 12 is simply the interior surface of the bathtub that holds water. The inside 12 includes a bathtub floor 14 with a first end 18, a ramp 20 (FIG. 2A) adjacent to the floor 14 at the first end 18 and a drain 16. In the embodiment shown, the bathtub floor 14 slopes slightly in the direction of the drain 16, allowing water to drain more easily. While the bathtub 10 shown in FIGS. 2A-2B has one drain 16, other embodiments may have either no drain or a plurality of drains.

Please replace paragraph [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

[0025] The ramp 20 has a ramp proximal end 22 and a ramp distal end 24 (FIGS. 2A-2B) with respect to the floor first end 18. The ramp 20 and the floor 14 are adjacent to each other, at the ramp proximal end 22 and the floor first end 18. Said ramp 20 slopes from about its distal end ~~22-24~~ to the first end 18 of floor 14 at an angle A (FIG. 2A) that allows a human being to slide safely from the distal end ~~22-24~~ to the floor 14.

Please replace paragraph [0027] with the following amended paragraph:

[0027] The bathing apparatus of FIGS. 1 and 2 also has a banister 26 for sliding into the bathtub 10 and for sitting on while bathing. The banister 26 extends from about the ramp distal end ~~22-24~~ downward, with respect to the floor 14, and then extends over a substantial length of the ramp 20 and of the floor 14. The banister 26 is coupled to the bathtub 10 in a manner that keeps the banister 26 stable and stationary enough for a bather to first slide down the banister 26 and then sit or lie on the banister 26 while bathing. The term "banister" is used in its ordinary meaning, but also includes any stable surface that may be straddled by a bather's legs while the bather safely slides down or sits on the surface.

Please replace paragraph [0028] with the following amended paragraph:

[0028] The banister 26 may be fixedly coupled, either permanently or removably, to the bathtub inside 12 at the ramp 20. There are many ways of fixedly coupling the banister 26 to the bathtub inside 12, including welding, bolting, riveting, or any one of many ways known to those skilled in the art. The banister 26 and the bathtub inside 12 may also be jointly molded as a single article. The banister 26 may simply arise out of the ramp 20 by descending less quickly than the ramp 20 on either side. Or, the banister 26 and the bathtub ~~12-10~~ may each be comprised of a plurality of parts or articles coupled together. The above and many other ways of accomplishing the fixed coupling will be apparent to one skilled in the art. Likewise, the coupling of the banister 26 and the bathtub inside 12 may be fixedly coupled only when in actual use, but otherwise adjustably coupled for various settings for accommodating various sizes of users (e.g., adult or child), different types of uses (e.g., bathing while sitting, lying or standing), or for other reasons. As

discussed below, ~~the~~ banister 26 and ~~the~~ ramp 20 could also be hingedly coupled, allowing banister to swivel about the hinge.

Please replace paragraph [0032] with the following amended paragraph:

[0032] The descending portion 28 slopes at angle B from about the ramp distal end 24 to the descending portion lower end 34. The descending portion 28 may extend out over the bathtub floor ~~12~~14 as shown. The slope of angle B is less than that of angle A of ~~the~~ ramp 20 and is suitable for sliding, while sitting, from the descending portion upper end 32 to the substantially level portion 30.

Please replace paragraph [0038] with the following amended paragraph:

[0038] Also, as noted previously, in the embodiment shown the bathtub floor 12 slopes slightly in the direction of ~~the~~ drain 16, allowing water to drain more easily. Another advantage of slight slope in ~~the~~ floor ~~12~~ 14 is that the height of the upper surface 38 relative to the floor ~~12~~ 14 increases as the distance to ~~the~~ drain 16 decreases. Thus, a bather with short legs (such as a child) may sit on the upper surface 38 farther away from ~~the~~ drain 16 and still have his or her feet resting on ~~the~~ floor ~~16~~14. A taller bather who feels more comfortable with a higher seating height can sit closer to ~~the~~ drain 16. Likewise, a bather who desires to kneel astride the upper surface 38 of the substantially level portion 30 can kneel farther away from ~~the~~ drain 16, allowing the knees to rest on ~~the~~ floor ~~12~~ 14.

Please replace paragraph [0040] with the following amended paragraph:

[0040] In a particular embodiment of the bathing apparatus, ~~the~~ ramp 20 and the bathtub floor 14 may, according to a top view, comprise ~~a region 17 further comprising~~ a first subregion 19, a second subregion 21, and a third subregion 23. The first subregion 19 and the second subregion 21 ~~being~~ are at least partly adjacent to each other and also ~~being~~ may be partly adjacent to the third subregion 23. The third subregion 23 ~~is~~ then defined ~~being~~ between part of the first sub region 19 and part of the second subregion 21. The ~~third~~ second subregion 21 commences at about the upper rim 15 and extends, again in a top view, a substantial distance into ~~the~~ floor 14. The third subregion 23, as viewed from a side, has a height and a length relative to the first subregion 19 and the second

subregion 21. The third subregion 23 has a descending portion 28 and a substantially level portion 30. The descending portion 28 extends from about the upper rim 15 in the direction of the floor 14. The height of the descending portion 28 gradually increases to form a slope as the descending portion 28 extends from about the upper rim 15 toward the floor 14 to allow a bather to slide on the descending portion 28 from the direction of the upper rim 15 in the direction of the floor 14. The substantially level portion 30 has an upper surface 38 relative to the floor 14. The height and length of the substantially level portion 30 allow a bather to sit on the upper surface 38 with feet extending toward or resting on the floor 14.

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

[0042] In the second embodiment, the level portion 30 extends in a curved manner both laterally, with respect to the floor 14, and upwardly out of the upper surface 38, to form the enlarged portion 40. The result is an enlarged portion 40 shaped similar to a motorcycle gas tank, allowing a bather to perhaps find additional leverage for the legs.